

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 1756

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: USIRJC, IR

SUBJECT: IRAN JOINT COMMISSION MEETING

1. DCM MET WITH HASSAN ALI MEHRAN, SENIOR UNDERSECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND FINANCE, MORNING OF FEBRUARY 23 TO REVIEW STATUS OF PREPARATION FOR US/IRAN JOINT COMMISSION MEETING WASHINGTON MARCH 3-4.

MEHRAN WILL ATTEND MEETING IN PLACE OF VAFA AND SHOULD BE LISTED IN RANK ORDER AFTER ETEMAD ON LIST PROVIDED TEHRAN 1620. HE IS, HOWEVER, DEPUTY CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT COMMISSION AND UNDERSECRETARY ROBINSON'S COUNTER-PART AND WILL PRESIDE AT ALL MEETINGS IN THIS CAPACITY.

2. THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING AS SET FORTH IN DEPARTMENT'S 35840 WAS REVIEWED AND AGREED UPON WITH ADDITION OF THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTED ITEMS:

THE ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND FINANCIAL COMMITTEE AGENDA SHOULD INCLUDE:

(1) US INVESTMENT IN IRAN;

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(2) FINANCE; AND

(3) TRADE

3. THE SCENARIO OUTLINED STATE 35842 SHOULD NOTE MINISTER ANSARY AND HIS PARTY WILL ARRIVE WASHINGTON MARCH 2 ABOARD TWA FLIGHT 803 FROM PARIS. IT UNDERSTOOD SECRETARY AS CO-CHAIRMAN OF JOINT COMMISSION WILL NOT MEET BUT IT IS ASSUMED OTHER APPROPRIATE USG OFFICIAL WILL BE PRESENT AND THAT SUITABLE PROTOCOL AND CUSTOMS ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE. MEHRAN SAID THAT IT IS ENVISAGED CO-CHAIRMAN WILL MAKE EXTEMPERANEOUS REMARKS AT OPENING PLENARY SESSION AND THEN ADJOURN FOR PRIVATE CONVERSATION. MEETING WILL BE TAKEN OVER BY DEPUTY CO-CHAIRMAN FOR ABOUT ONE-HALF HOUR OF GENERAL DISCUSSION AND INSTRUCTION TO ALL COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN. FOCUS OF DISCUSSION WILL BE DEVELOPMENT OF AGREED UPON PROTOCOL WHICH WILL BE SIGNED BY CO-CHAIRMAN AT CONCLUSION OF TWO-DAY SESSION. COMMITTEES WILL ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP FIRMER POSITIONS AND SPECIFICITY ON ITEMS WITHIN THEIR JURISDICTION WHICH CAN BE INCLUDED IN FINAL PROTOCOL. MEHRAN HOPES TO PROVIDE US WITH GOI DRAFT OF PROTOCOL WHICH WE CAN HOPEFULLY BEGIN TO BLEND WITH OUR OWN THOUGHTS IN ADVANCE OF THE COMMISSION MEETING. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD WE WERE ALSO WORKING ON A DRAFT WHICH HE MIGHT HAVE IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE HOPED BOTH SIDES WOULD HAVE FURTHER AND NEW IDEAS TO DISCUSS IN COMMITTEE MEETINGS WHICH MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN THE FINAL PROTOCOL.

4. WITH REFERENCE TO OUR PROPOSED TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT, MEHRAN SAID THAT GOI WAS PREPARED TO SIGN IT PROVIDED WE COULD REACH AGREEMENT ON SOME CHANGE IN ITS LANGUAGE WHICH HE WAS PRESENTLY WORKING ON. THE ONLY MAJOR CHANGE IN SUBSTANCE THAT HE HAS IN MIND IS THE ELIMINATION OF THE PROVISION FOR A TRUST FUND. MEHRAN FEELS THAT THIS IS UNNECESSARY (AND BY IMPLICATION CONDENSING) AND THAT PAYMENT FOR EXPERT SERVICES CAN BE HANDLED BY A MUTUALLY AGREED UPON BILLING ARRANGEMENT. IT WAS NOTED THAT TWO MINI-TECHNICAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS ARE ALREADY IN EFFECT WHICH PROVIDE FOR TRUST FUNDS. MEHRAN SAID THAT HE WOULD LOOK INTO THIS WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL
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VIEW TO BRINGING ALL SUCH ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE UNBRELLA OF A COMMON AGREEMENT WITH COMMON TERMS AND CONDITIONS.

5. AS REPORTED SEPARATELY TEHRAN 1732, IT IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER IRAN WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE US ITS FINAL VIEWS ON OUR PROPOSED NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT MUCH BEFORE THE COMMISSION MEETING. ACCORDINGLY, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO PLAN INITIATING AN AGREEMENT DURING THE COMMISSION MEETING RATHER THAN A FINAL SIGNATURE.

6. MEHRAN SAID THAT IRAN WELCOMES THE FORMATION OF A JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL AND IS PREPARED TO SIGN SUCH AN AGREEMENT PROVIDED WE CAN SORT OUT WHATEVER LEGAL PROBLEMS WE MAY HAVE WITH RESPECT TO THE OPERATION OF SUCH AN ORGANIZATION. THIS QUESTION WAS DISCUSSED BY UNDER SECRETARIES ROBINSON AND TABOR DURING THEIR VISITS HERE.

7. WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE MEETING AND/OR LUNCHEON WITH MINISTER ANSARY AND THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, MEHRAN WAS ADVISED THAT WE WERE LOOKING INTO THE QUESTION AND WOULD LET HIM KNOW SOONEST. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE SOMETHING OF A PRELUDE TO THE FORMATION OF A JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL. MEHRAN SAID SUCH A MEETING WAS FINE BUT FAR MORE IMPORTANT WAS THE QUESTION OF ANSARY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HIS PRESENCE IN THE STATES TO GET ACROSS TO THE PRESS AND THE CONGRESS IRAN'S POSITION ON SEVERAL VITAL MATTERS SUCH AS OIL, INVESTMENT, AND THE OPPORTUNITIES IRAN PRESENTED TO AMERICAN BUSINESS INTERESTS. ACCORDINGLY, HE URGED THAT UNDER SECRETARY ROBINSON PURSUE THE QUESTION OF ANSARY MEETING WITH SELECTED CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS AS HE HAD DISCUSSED DURING HIS VISIT AND THAT WE ARRANGE FOR SOME FORUM FOR ANSARY TO MEET WITH THE PRESS. ALTHOUGH WE HAD NOT MENTIONED IT, MEHRAN SPECIFICALLY ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A LUNCHEON WITH THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB. HE SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THIS MIGHT NOT BE THE FRIENDLIEST OF FORUMS, BUT IRAN'S PROBLEMS WERE NOT WITH THE ADMINISTRATION AND THIS WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO GET SOME OF IRAN'S DIFFERENCES WITH THE PRESS AND THE CONGRESS OUT ON THE PUBLIC TABLE.

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8. FINALLY, MEHRAN ASKED FOR ADVANCE INFORMATION ON WHAT PRESS-TV ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE TO COVER COMMISSION MEETINGS, SIGNATURES OF PROTOCOL, PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC. IN THIS CONNECTION HE REPEATED A REMARK MADE EARLIER BY MINISTER ANSARY THAT IT SEEMED TO IRAN THAT SOME \$10-15 BILLION WORTH OF IRAN-US BUSINESS WAS OF SUFFICIENT IMPORTANCE TO DESERVE SPECIAL ATTENTION BY USG OFFICIALS AND THE PUBLIC.

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